



The Shrewsbury and
Telford Hospital
NHS Trust

Patient Information

The Shropshire and Mid Wales Fertility Centre

Female Fertility Investigations

Patient Information

Shropshire and Mid Wales Fertility Centre

Address: Severn Fields Health Village, Sundorne Road,
Shrewsbury SY1 4RQ.

Tel:01743 261202

Introduction

After your history taking appointment with a fertility nurse you will need to have some tests done before you see a doctor to discuss your results and plan any treatment that may be necessary.

For most women this will just be blood tests and an ultrasound scan..

You will need to have blood taken on two different days in your menstrual cycle as instructed in your letter. **It is very important that you have the blood tests done at the correct time or the results can be incorrect.** If your period is much earlier or later than expected please let the fertility department know so we can reschedule for the correct day. You will be given an appointment to visit the fertility clinic at Severn Fields to have the blood taken and the samples will be sent to the hospital laboratory for testing.

It is very important you get the blood tests done as soon possible as if the results are not back before your doctor's appointment it will be cancelled and this could delay any offer of treatment.

If you have a male partner they will be asked to provide one or two semen samples for the scientists to analyse in the laboratory. Information about this is provided in a separate leaflet and again, it is important to get all of these done as soon as possible before your medical appointment.

Please note that not everyone needs to have all these tests done. Some may have already been done recently by your GP (family doctor) if you have seen them about your fertility. If you are seeking treatment as a self-funded patient or have had investigations before you may need fewer tests.

Ultrasound scan

An internal (vaginal) ultrasound scan is done by a doctor to check your uterus (womb) and ovaries. Amongst other things they will be looking for endometriosis, cysts and fibroids. They will also do an Antral Follicle Count which gives an idea of ovarian reserve (the amount of eggs you have left), how you are likely to respond to any fertility treatment and whether or not you have Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome.

The scan can be done at any time of the month, it doesn't matter if you are on your period. We have designated scan rooms at Severn Fields to do this. The doctor will be accompanied by a female chaperone to help them and offer you reassurance.

Blood Tests

Follicle Stimulating Hormone (FSH)

FSH is a hormone that stimulates the growth of follicles in the ovaries that contain eggs. A high level of FSH can indicate a low ovarian reserve (few eggs remain in the body) and that it may be more difficult to become pregnant naturally. It is normal for FSH levels to rise with increasing age (over 35 years) as a woman nears menopause.

The level of FSH is also important when the doctor is planning fertility treatment as it is a useful indicator of how the ovaries will react to the stimulation medication.

Important - The levels of this hormone in your blood needs to be measured on day 2-4 of your menstrual cycle, where day 1 is the day your period started (red flow).

Anti-mullerian hormone (AMH)

AMH is also a hormone that is measured to check on a woman's ovarian reserve and how the ovaries may respond to treatment. AMH levels naturally drop as a woman approaches menopause. A low AMH can suggest a woman is experiencing a premature menopause (before age 40) or an early menopause (before age 45). The average age of menopause is 52.

A high AMH can indicate Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) and in rare cases, some types of ovarian cancer.

The timing of the AMH is not important so the clinic normally asks you to get your AMH done at the same time as your FSH test.

Progesterone

The levels of a hormone called Progesterone are checked to ensure a patient is ovulating (an egg is being released from the ovary). This test is done 7 days before you expect your next period to arrive. A woman who has an average 28-day cycle would do this on day 21 (where day 1 is the day her last period started).

Other Blood Tests that may be requested

It doesn't matter which day of the month these are taken so they are usually done alongside the FSH or Progesterone test.

Chlamydia Antibodies

A blood test is done to check if you have antibodies to Chlamydia. A positive result indicates that you have been infected at some point with Chlamydia bacteria. Chlamydia can be sexually transmitted and may cause narrowing or blockage of the fallopian tubes making natural pregnancy unlikely or impossible. It is important to note though that there are other types of Chlamydia that cause other infections e.g. infections of the eye or chest that can also give a positive result but have no effect on your fertility. If your result comes back positive you will be contacted by a doctor to ask you to provide a urine sample or vaginal swab to test for a current infection.

Thyroid Stimulating Hormone (TSH)

The clinic may test for TSH levels to make sure you haven't got an undiagnosed thyroid condition before seeking fertility treatment. It is important that any thyroid conditions are well managed before trying to conceive.

Rubella

Rubella is a virus also known as German Measles. This screening test checks for immunity to this virus. If a woman catches Rubella during pregnancy, it can cause developmental and health problems for the baby. Most women will already have immunity either through vaccination or natural infection in early life. If the test shows that a woman is not protected

she might want to consider vaccination before trying to conceive.

Ca125

This is a test that can be used to detect certain types of cancer, including ovarian cancer.

Next Steps

Your doctor will look at all the results and explain them to you at your medical appointment. They may recommend some further tests at this point, either to repeat some of those already done or to do some new ones. If this is the case further information will be given at the time.

Contact details for more information

Useful telephone numbers

Fertility nursing team **01743 261202** or call the hospital switchboard on **01743 261000** and ask to be put through to the Fertility unit. Please note the department accepts calls from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

More information can be found on the fertility unit website www.shropshireivf.nhs.uk

Further information is available from;

Patient Advise and Liaison Service (PALS)

We act on your behalf when handling patient and family concerns, liaising with staff, managers and where appropriate, relevant organisations to negotiate immediate or prompt solutions. We can also help you get support from other local or national agencies.

Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, Tel: 0800 783 0057 or 01743 261691

Princess Royal Hospital, Tel: 01952 282888

Other Sources of Information

NHS 111

A fast and easy way to get the right help, whatever the time. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

Telephone: 111 (free from a landline or mobile)

Website: www.nhs.uk

Patient UK

Provides leaflets on health and disease translated into 11 other languages as well as links to national support/self-help groups and a directory of UK health websites.

Website: www.patient.info

Special Needs Information

Please contact the Fertility Unit to discuss if you need this information in another format.

Website: www.sath.nhs.uk

www.shropshireivf.nhs.uk

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